

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Currently Amended) A surgical ablation instrument, comprising:  
a first member having a first insulative tissue-opposing portion and a first tissue-contacting conductive element extending along a length of the first insulative tissue-opposing portion and having a ~~substantially~~-circular cross-sectional shape extending along a length thereof, the first tissue-contacting conductive element being in communication with a source of ablative energy; and  
a second member having a second insulative tissue-opposing portion and a second tissue-contacting conductive element extending along a length of the second insulative tissue-opposing portion and having a ~~substantially~~-circular cross-sectional shape extending along a length thereof, the second tissue-contacting conductive element being in communication with a source of ablative energy, and the second member being pivotally coupled to the first member and including a distal, tissue-piercing tip adapted to be deployed into tissue to allow the first tissue-contacting conductive element to be positioned on a first tissue surface and the second tissue-contacting conductive element to be positioned on a second tissue surface opposed to the first tissue surface such that ablative energy can be transmitted between the first and second tissue-contacting conductive elements.
2. (Original) The ablation instrument of claim 1, wherein the first and second members are movable between a first, open position and a second, closed position in which the first member is adjacent to the second member.
3. (Original) The ablation instrument of claim 2, further comprising an actuating member mated to the first and second members and effective to selectively move the members between the open and closed positions.
4. (Previously Presented) The ablation instrument of claim 3, wherein the first and second members are elongate and each member includes a proximal end mated to the actuating member, and a distal portion having the tissue-contacting conductive element disposed thereon.
5. (Cancelled).

6. (Currently Amended) The ablation instrument of claim 4, further comprising a third tissue-contacting conductive element extending along the length of the first insulative tissue-opposing portion of the first member and having a ~~a substantially~~-circular cross-sectional shape extending along a length thereof.
7. (Previously Presented) The ablation instrument of claim 1, further comprising:
  - a first conductor element extending from the first conductive element and adapted to communicate with the source of ablative energy; and
  - a second conductor element extending from the second conductive element and adapted to communicate with the source of ablative energy.
8. (Previously Presented) The ablation instrument of claim 1, wherein one of the first and second conductive elements is an active energy transmitting electrode, and the other one of the first and second conductive elements is a return electrode.
9. (Previously Presented) The ablation instrument of claim 1, wherein at least one of the first and second members is malleable.
10. (Previously Presented) The ablation instrument of claim 1, wherein the first insulative tissue-opposing portion is disposed around a portion of the first tissue-contacting conductive element, and the second insulative tissue-opposing portion is disposed around a portion of the second tissue-contacting conductive element.
11. (Original) The ablation instrument of claim 3, wherein the actuating member comprises opposed first and second handles, wherein a force applied to bring the first and second handles in contact with each other causes opening of the first and second members.
12. (Original) The ablation instrument of claim 3, wherein the first and second members are biased to the closed position.
13. (Currently Amended) An ablation instrument, comprising:

first and second members opposed to and pivotally movable relative to each other, the first member having first and second tissue-contacting conductive elements extending along a length thereof, the first and second tissue-contacting conductive elements each having a substantially circular cross-sectional shape, and the second member including third tissue-contacting conductive element extending along a length thereof and having a substantially-circular cross-sectional shape, the second member further including a distal tissue piercing tip that is adapted to be selectively deployed into tissue to allow the tissue-contacting conductive surface of each of the first and second members to be disposed on opposed sides of tissue; and

first and second conductor elements mated to the first and second members, at least one of the first and second conductor elements being effective to transmit ablative energy to at least one of the tissue-contacting conductive elements of the first and second members.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Previously Presented) The ablation instrument of claim 13, wherein the instrument further includes an actuating member mated to the first and second members that is effective to move the members between an open position and a closed position.

16. (Previously Presented) The ablation instrument of claim 13, wherein the first, second, and third tissue-contacting conductive elements are at least partially surrounded by an insulative coating.

17-19. (Cancelled).